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Guatemala: Rural Workers' Organization Demand Wage Hikes

by Deborah Tyroler

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In an Aug. 13 report broadcast over radio news program Guatemala Flash, the Committee for Campesino Unity (CUC) asserted that living conditions of workers on agro-export plantations located in the southern coastal area are deplorable. The only difference between conditions experienced by slaves under the conquistadores and those endured by employees on the plantations today is that contemporary workers are organized and committed. Preparations are underway for harvest on the coastal coffee, cotton and sugarcane plantations. CUC demands 20 quetzals per day for day laborers, or 20 quetzals per hundred pounds of coffee or cotton, and 20 quetzals per ton of sugarcane for piece work contract labor. The Committee has threatened a general strike if wage demands are ignored. (Basic data from Cerigua weekly briefs, 08/13-19/90)

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